

Advancing Racial Equity Key Concepts, Definitions & Resources

One of the goals for the [Leading for Equity Seminar](#) this past fall was to develop a common understanding of the impact that inequitable systems and practices have on children and families of color. Since not everyone was able to participate, we developed a brief summary of the concepts and definitions that were shared¹, in order for the group to have some common language as we continue the journey to develop and implement a racial equity lens for the Early Learning Advisory Council.

What does Equity mean?

Equity is when children receive what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential. Historical and structural roots of inequity demands differentiated resources for children furthest from opportunity. To “level the playing field”, we cannot rely on a one-size-fits-all approach or assume that given equal chances, all children will arrive at the same endpoint.

What does Racial Equity mean?

Race is still a significant predictor of progress and success in early childhood, school, jobs, healthcare, criminal justice and where we live, despite socioeconomic status. We know we are working towards racial equity when we work together to transform our institutions and systems to eliminate inequitable practices and close opportunity gaps for children and families of color.

Using a Racial Equity Lens

Using a racial equity lens allows us to see our context (policies, practices, systems, outcomes, power, relationships and solutions) in new and revealing ways.

Situatedness

We each stand differently with respect to our opportunities for work, education, parenting, etc. Not only are people situated differently with regard to institutions, people are situated differently with regard to infrastructure. People are impacted by the relationships between institutions and systems, but people also impact these relationships and can change the structure of the system.

Unconscious/Implicit Bias

People unconsciously think about race even when it is not explicitly discussed. Implicit Bias is when a person’s actions or decisions are at odds with their intentions. However, biases are malleable and can be dismantled by:

- Normalizing the idea of bias (avoid denial)
- Recognizing and checking assumptions
- Making time for individual story (show empathy)
- Making time for affective *and* cognitive processing
- Teaching your brain new associations (look for counter-stereotype examples)

Additional Resources

- **Annie E. Casey Foundation, Race for Results Report:**
<http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-RaceforResults-2014.pdf>
- **The State of Washington’s Children:** http://kidscountwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/State_of_Washington_Children_2013.pdf
- **Washington State Budget and Policy Center, Facing Race 2015 Report:**
<http://budgetandpolicy.org/reports/Facing%20Race%20Web%20v2.pdf>

¹ Concepts and definitions were pulled from National Equity Project’s *Leading for Equity* seminar booklet and [slides](#). Please contact us at elac@del.wa.gov, if you did not receive a copy of the booklet.